

University of Waterloo
SENATE
Minutes of the May 4, 2026 Meeting

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Yasmeen Almomani, Veronica Austen, Michael Barnett-Cowan, Jordan Bauman, Andrew Chang, David Clausi, Martin Cooke, Cecilia Cotton, Ray Darling, Hans De Sterck, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, David DeVidi, Michael Drescher, Thomas Duever, Andrea Edginton, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Bruce Frayne, Gen Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Vivek Goel (Chair), Vikas Gupta, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Nadine Ibrahim, Marc Jerry, Acey Kaspar, Misha Khan, Scott Kline, Jochen Koenemann, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, John Lewis, Ondrej Lhotak, Christopher Lim, Jun Liu, Lili Liu, Shana MacDonald, Carol Ann MacGregor, Blake Madill, Heather Mair, Colleen Maxwell, Peter Meehan, Sushanta Mitra, Richard Myers, Carter Neal, Christopher Nielsen, Alex Pawelko, David Porreca, Neil Randall, Arya Razmjoo, Jacinda Reitsma, Sharon Roberts, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, Samir Sharma, James Skidmore, Karen Sunabacka, Su-Yin Tan, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Katie Traynor, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Bojana Videkanic, Justin Wan, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Jeffrey Wilson, Stan Woo, Clarence Woudsma, En-Hui Yang

Regrets: Laith Alkhawaldeh, Aubrey Basdeo, Raouf Boutaba, Helen Chen, Teresa Fortney, Murray Gamble, Rob Gorbet, Chris Houser, Achim Kempf, Brad Lushman, Pendar Mahmoudi, James Nugent, Nicholas Pellegrino, Jessica Rindlisbacher, Meray Sadek, Jagdeep Singh Bachher

Guests/Resources: Kathy Acheson, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, LeeAnne Ferries, Jenny Flagler-George, Diana Goncalves, Jason Grove, Diane Johnston, Andrea Kelman, Jennifer Kieffer, Tony Ly, Nick Manning, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Fayaz Noormohamed, Judene Pretti, Chris Read, Nadia Singh, Jacob Watson, Tim Weber-Kraljevski

Organization of Meeting: Vivek Goel took the chair and Gen Gauthier-Chalifour acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present.

1. Governance Resources

This item was provided for information only.

2. OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed all members to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Samir Sharma as a new ex-officio student member of Senate. Sharma began their term as WUSA President on May 1, 2026.

The Chair highlighted several items on the consent agenda related to elections and appointments and encouraged senators to share the call for nominations for the Senate by-election, which closes on May 7, 2026, with colleagues who may be interested in serving on Senate.

3. Territorial Acknowledgement

Jochen Koenemann, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics, provided the territorial acknowledgement and offered a personal reflection.

4. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

4.1. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

4.2. Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items

A member requested that item 11.2 be pulled from the consent agenda. The Chair confirmed the item would be heard under item 12: Items removed from the consent agenda.

Another member of Senate and the Senate Engagement Working Group (SEWG) requested to defer item 6.1 Bylaw 1 Amendments to the June meeting of Senate as they felt many faculty were not able to review the material, and that the incoming President should be involved in the setting of new Senate Bylaws and Rules of Procedure.

Members discussed that the Bylaw will have two readings which allows ample time for members to provide input.

The Chair noted the incoming President had been briefed on the work of SEWG and the materials presented.

De Sterck and Porreca moved to defer the item. The motion did not carry.

A motion was heard to approve the agenda as amended, and to approve or receive for information the items on the consent agenda, listed as items 11.1 and 11.3-11.8 of the Senate agenda. Porreca and Pawelko. Carried.

4.3. Minutes of the April 6, 2026 Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes.

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2026 meeting, as distributed. Skidmore and Porreca. Carried.

4.4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the President

5.1. General Update

Vivek Goel, President and Chair of Senate, reported that a joint event with the Balsillie School of International Affairs was held on April 7, 2026. It brought together more than 200 leaders from the community, academia, government, and the public and private sectors who had previously participated in the 2025 CEO Challenge Summit. Through the Waterloo Region AI Coalition, the University is partnering with Communitel and other community organizations to support small and medium-sized businesses. The initiative is expected to expand over time to include non-profits and health-care partners, with the goal of improving productivity through AI adoption. It is creating co-op opportunities for students in these organizations. The Ontario Minister of Finance highlighted the initiative in the budget speech, underscoring the University's strong community partnerships.

The University continues to work with the Waterloo Region Health Network to work on concepts for innovative collaboration as the new facility on the North Campus is designed. Work continues to develop a vision for a shared set of initiatives around innovation in healthcare and improvements in the delivery of health services.

The University was pleased to host Waterloo Mayor McCabe's State of the City address on April 16, 2026 at the Fieldhouse, with over 400 people in attendance. The event demonstrated the University's engagement with the community and showcased the Fieldhouse.

On April 28, 2026, Minister of Finance, Francois-Philippe Champagne, tabled the Spring Economic Update, and more significantly, days later chose to visit the University of Waterloo

campus, toured a number of facilities, and engaged with students and faculty. Champagne commended UW students during the visit.

6. Report of the Senate Executive Committee

6.1. Senate Engagement Working Group Update

Laura Deakin and Marcus Shantz, Co-Chairs of the Senate Engagement Working Group, provided an update on the progress of the working group and an overview of the proposed Bylaw 1 amendments and draft Rules of Procedure, as included in the meeting materials. The proposed amendments include housekeeping changes, clarification regarding the calling of special meetings, and the introduction of informal sessions. The draft Rules of Procedure establish a procedural framework for the orderly, transparent, and equitable conduct of Senate business, while supporting respectful debate and consideration of diverse perspectives.

Members discussed the documents, including the process for requesting a special meeting, the use and limitations of speaking rules, the role and mandate of the Senate Executive Committee, and opportunities to encourage broader participation in Senate discussions. Some members commented positively on the addition of informal sessions.

A member requested that their feedback to the working group receive a response and asked about next steps for providing additional feedback. Gen Gauthier-Chalifour, University Secretary, noted that the working group would share an invitation to a future engagement session for members to provide further feedback. The final draft documents would be presented at the June meeting of Senate, should the working group determine they are ready for Senate approval.

7. Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council

7.1. Faculty of Science

David DeVidi, Chair of the Senate Undergraduate Council, spoke to the modification, as presented in the meeting materials.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the major modifications for the Biochemistry Specialization, Biology Specialization, and Biotechnology Specialization for the Faculty of Science, effective September 1, 2027, as presented. DeVidi and Deakin. Carried.

8. Policy

8.1. Amendments to Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances

Tom Duever, Interim Vice-President, Academic and Provost, spoke to the amendments to Policy 70, as provided in the meeting materials. The draft provided has been through extensive consultation and reflects existing practices.

The undergraduate student members spoke to the inclusion of students in the consultation process, and their support of the recent amendments in response to student concerns. They noted their view that petition committees should have student representatives. Members discussed the sensitive materials that are provided to committee members, consistency between Faculties and that different programs have different requirements.

The Chair noted that the policy has been under review for a number of years and committed to ongoing conversations with students about where students could be included in the process as appropriate.

A member noted an editorial correction under 8.16 where the incorrect policy number is listed. It was confirmed this would be corrected in the final version.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the amended Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, as amended, effective June 1, 2026. Duever and Pawelko. Carried.

9. Annual Reports

9.1. Annual Report from FAUW

David Porreca, President of FAUW, presented the Annual Report. Porreca highlighted accomplishments from the past year, including personnel changes; governance and strategic planning initiatives, including a governance review that will be completed soon; events such as the Hagey Lecture Series; ongoing discussions related to the restructuring of the Board Pension and Benefits Committee; and policies currently in development. There were no questions.

9.2. Co-operative and Experiential Education Report

Judene Pretti, Interim Associate Provost, Co-operative and Experiential Education, presented the Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) Report, as provided in the meeting materials. Pretti highlighted the Student at the Centre approach and areas of focus for the year, including modern systems and data; a well-designed learning experience; strong employer partnerships; and the importance of research and expertise. There were no questions.

9.3. UCSA Annual Report on Student Appeals

David DeVidi, Co-Chair of the University Committee on Student Appeals (UCSA), spoke to the report, as provided in the meeting materials.

Members discussed AI-related appeals and how faculty determine whether AI has been used inappropriately. DeVidi noted that the number of AI-related cases is increasing and that, as a community, there is a need to explore what students should know before graduating and how knowledge and use of AI should be assessed.

The Chair noted that an update on the development of AI Principles would be provided at the June meeting of Senate.

10. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Council

Charmaine Dean, Vice-President, Research and International, and Chair of the Senate Research and Innovation Council (SRIC), provided a verbal update on recent consultations related to defence research. Dean noted the University's longstanding involvement in defence-related research and the growing regional and national momentum related to dual-use applications and nation-building initiatives. Follow-up consultations hosted by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International, with participation from all faculties, highlighted the broad scope of relevant research areas, including cybersecurity, health, artificial intelligence, food security, environmental monitoring, and global governance.

Dean emphasized the importance of academic freedom, oversight of partnerships, and reputational considerations, and noted that the University is well positioned to contribute in ways that align with its values, strengths, and broader societal contributions.

A member asked for clarification regarding weapons-related research. Dean noted that grant proposal calls are distributed broadly, include mechanisms for transparency, and should remain open to researchers to pursue. Another member emphasized the importance of recognizing the ongoing peace-related work being undertaken across the University, including within the Faculty of Arts.

11. Consent Agenda

The following items were approved/received for information as part of the consent agenda motion for approval under item 4.2.

- 11.1. Filling Vacancy on Senate Executive Committee – Appointment of the New Member
- 11.3. 2026 faculty at Large Senator By-Election – Call for Nominations

- 11.4. Report of the AQUE Committee
- 11.5. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Council
- 11.6. Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council
- 11.7. Report of the Vice-President Academic and Provost
- 11.8. Report of the Vice-President, Research and International

12. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

A senator requested to remove item 11.2 2026-2027 Senators to Board of Governors Election Results from the consent agenda. The senator asked for clarification of how the upcoming vacancy of the undergraduate student Board seat would be filled for the June Board meeting.

Gauthier-Chalifour confirmed that a motion to fill the vacancy would be brought forward to the May SEC and June Senate meetings. The Secretariat is working with the undergraduate student senators to bring a nomination forward.

The Chair called for nominations from the floor. There were none.

A motion was heard that Senate ratify the acclamation of the undergraduate and graduate student members to the Board of Governors for the 2026-2027 governance year. Pawelko and Porreca. Carried.

13. Other Business

There were no other items of business.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:48p.m. The next meeting of Senate will be on Monday June 8, 2026.

May 4, 2026

Ashley Day
Associate University Secretary